

Affordable Housing: Seattle Housing Authority (SHA)

Public Housing Improvements

SHA is in the midst of several multi-year efforts to redevelop three World War II era-public housing communities – NewHolly, Rainier Vista and High Point. Seed money for these efforts came from \$117 million in federal HOPE VI grants. Fiscal year¹ 2005 housing development activities are summarized below. Each redevelopment is much more comprehensive than can be described here. For more information on the redevelopments please see:

www.seattlehousing.org/Development/development.html.

NewHolly

All rental units at NewHolly are now complete and occupied. SHA currently manages 400 public housing units and 220 other rental units serving households with a range of incomes at NewHolly. In 2005, SHA completed construction of 219 rental units for households with a mix of incomes in the third and final phase, Othello Station. In addition, SHA's non-profit partners—Retirement Housing Foundation and Providence Health Systems—operate the 315-unit elder village. These buildings provide rental housing for seniors with a range of incomes and ability to live independently.

Homeownership units are still in development in the second and third phases of NewHolly. During 2005, private home builders had 223 market rate units in development, on the market or sold. An additional 39 homeownership units affordable to households with incomes below 80 percent of area median were also in development. Thirty-one of these were developed by Habitat for Humanity. One public housing resident from Rainier Vista was able to purchase a Habitat unit.

¹ SHA's fiscal year is October 1-September 30. SHA is required to submit a comprehensive annual report to HUD on all agency activities and use of funds. This section of the CAPER is an extract of that report. The full report can be found on SHA's website at <http://www.seattlehousing.org/Development/assetman/MTW05Rpt.html>.

Rainier Vista



McBride Court, 37 units of Rainier Vista rental housing, named for Judi McBride, a resident leader during the redevelopment planning process.

SHA completed construction and lease-up of 125 public housing and 59 tax-credit rental units in Rainier Vista Phase I. Several builders purchased land on which they will build and sell 120 market-rate homes.

In April, Providence Health Systems completed lease-up of Gamelin House, 78 units of low-income housing for seniors funded by a Section 202 grant. Housing Resources Group (HRG) and AIDS Housing of Washington began construction of the 50-unit Genesee House, with 22 units for people with disabilities and funded through a Section 811 grant, 17 Rainier Vista replacement units for households with incomes below 30 percent of area median income and 11 units of workforce housing. Completion of Genesee House is scheduled for February 2006.

High Point

The first phase of High Point will have 344 rental units – 200 public housing and 144 tax-credit units. Thirty-five units are “Breathe Easy” Homes with physical features and a package of education and supports to mitigate the impacts of asthma on children and their families. During the year, 95 rental units were finished. Providence Health Systems is scheduled to open St. Elizabeth House in January 2006. It will provide 75 units of Section 202 housing for seniors.



Kids play in a pocket park next to new High Point rental housing.

In 2005, SHA signed a purchase and sale agreement with a major national senior housing developer for a 160-unit market-rate building. The project will be a congregate-care facility combining private living quarters with centralized dining services on a four-acre parcel directly south of St. Elizabeth House.

A site has been selected for Habitat for Humanity to build eight homes for low-income buyers. SHA also sold land for 203 homes for sale to four builders. Homes began selling in November 2005 and include condominium flats, townhomes, carriage houses and detached single-family homes.

Scattered sites portfolio reconfiguration

In 2005, SHA began to sell up to 200 public housing scattered site units and replace them with units that are more efficient to manage and maintain and better located to meet resident needs. By the end of its fiscal year, SHA had:

- Relocated all but five of the households in the first 71 units to be sold to other public housing units. One resident was able to purchase the unit she had lived in for 18 years;
- Sold 64 of the first 71 units identified for sale;
- Bought 40 replacement units (2+ bedroom units), and had another four under contract;
- Identified another 125 units for sale in 2006-2007; and
- Submitted a disposition application to HUD for 79 of these units.

***homeWorks*, the public housing high-rise renovation program**

For the past two years, SHA has been planning the rehabilitation of many public housing high-rises by leveraging HUD capital subsidy with private investment. SHA's intent is to rehabilitate major building systems and address deferred maintenance in about 20-25 high-rises in three phases over the next several years. To that end, during 2005, SHA:

- Hired a program manager for the project, now called ***homeWorks***;
- Hired a staff communications liaison to ensure effective communication to lessen impacts on residents;
- Contracted for design services for all three phases;
- Contracted with a General Contractor/Construction Manager for Phase 1 (seven buildings);
- Selected a tax-credit equity partner for Phase 1;
- Completed the Phase 1 mixed-finance closing; and
- Submitted designs for building permits.


Yesler Terrace

Toward the end of the year, SHA began working with the Yesler Terrace Community Council to identify Council representatives to be involved in the planning process for redevelopment of this 561-unit, 60+-year old public housing community adjacent to downtown Seattle.

Resident Initiatives

Employment

SHA's employment program, called *The Job Connection*, offers employment services at five offices: Yesler Terrace and Lake City (North Seattle) and in each HOPE VI community. Services include detailed intake assessment, life plan development, case management, placement assistance and follow-up for career upgrades. Multi-cultural and -lingual staff is representative of the communities they serve.

	<p><i>Jeff Thungc, Job Connection placement specialist and Job Connection client, Abdurazaq Abdulqadir in front of the Safeway where Mr. Abdulqadir works as a courtesy clerk.</i></p>	<p>SHA residents with limited English language skills, no work history and no document-able education often come to The Job Connection. To help these clients make their way into employment, SHA is developing a "Work Experience" program for adults. SHA is identifying employers to participate in this program beginning early in FY 2006.</p>
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Employment Outcomes	Number	Industry Type	Placements
Job Connection Enrollment	311	Construction/Trades	29
Enrolled TANF recipients	30	Retail/Service/Hospitality	60
Enrolled youth	8	Service Paraprofessionals	19
Adults		Business/Clerical	16
Total placements	161	Medical – all levels	6
Unduplicated placements	150	Manufacturing	31
Average hourly wage	\$10.33	Total placements	161
Benefits after probationary period	101 or 63%		
Full Time Jobs as of hire date	131 or 81%		
Raises or career advancement	26 or 16%		
Percent increase in wages	2%-29%		
Youth*			
Work Experience Program placements	11		
Unduplicated youth placed	6		
*The Work Experience program, funded by a City of Seattle grant, offers youth 240 hours of paid work over 12-24 weeks so that they may learn a wide range of job skills based on their interests.			

Other employment outcomes:

- Seven people started their own businesses: three janitorial services, a high-end clothing store for Muslim women, a hair salon, a medical transport business and a taxi-cab business.



Barka Mohamed, Yesler Terrace resident and Nordstrom tailor's apprentice and Siep Tho, High Point resident and apprenticeship graduate.

- Since 2001, SHA has worked with Nordstrom to develop a year-long, paid apprenticeship for public housing residents. The training is a mix of computer-based and on-the-job training and industry-specific ESL classes. Three residents successfully completed the apprenticeship in FY 2005, were placed in jobs at Nordstrom and given a minimum of a dollar an hour raise. A second year of training has been offered to five Job Connection participants.

- “Section 3” is a federal requirement that work created by HUD-funded projects go, as much as possible, to residents and businesses in the project area. In FY 2004, SHA enhanced its Section 3 program by hiring a coordinator to make the connections between contractors and Section 3 eligible individuals and businesses. Employment and business development outcomes in 2005 included:
 - Forty-five Section 3 eligible individuals were placed in construction jobs at High Point and Rainier Vista. Of the 45, 15 were SHA public housing residents: ten from High Point, three from NewHolly and two from Yesler Terrace.
 - SHA worked with the Seattle Parks Department to create a Capital Projects Construction Aide position and hire a qualified SHA resident into that position.

Family Self-Sufficiency

At the end of FY 2005, 191 Housing Choice Voucher and 20 public housing participants were enrolled in the Family Self-Sufficiency (FSS) program. New clients are being enrolled as participants graduate, terminate or leave the program after reaching the income limits.

Of the 59 FSS graduates in FY 2005:

- 57 increased their income from employment.
- 33 who entered FSS with no income from wages had employment income on graduation.
- 37 left TANF and obtained employment.
- Fourteen more than doubled their household income, 10 more than tripled it, and 19 more than quadrupled their total income.
- Three participants started businesses: cleaning services, fashion design and sewing and alterations.

FSS household income as a percent of area median			FSS participant job types and number			
Income Group	On entry	On exit				
< 30%	51	10	Business/clerical	21	Retail/service/hospitality	6
30%-50%	7	30	Construction/trades	3	Self-employed	3
50%-80%	1	18	Medical-all levels	9	Service paraprofessional	7
80%-100%	0	1	Professional	2	Social Services	8

Community Building

SHA currently employs six Community Builders and a VISTA Volunteer. Community-Building-in-Action has resulted in increased resources and self-help capacity in SHA communities. Following are examples of community building initiatives during FY 2005.

NewHolly Multicultural Communication Club: For the past two years, several NewHolly residents have been working together on the *Many Neighbors, Many Stories* project funded by a Seattle DON Neighborhood Matching Fund, Race and Social Justice Grant. This project involves cross-cultural neighbor-to-neighbor interviews, cultural workshops and research and has led to the publishing of a booklet about the stories of NewHolly residents. The book includes key phrases in Amharic, Tigrinya, Somali, Oromo, Khmer, Vietnamese, Spanish, Chinese and Blackfoot, as well as basic cultural tips designed to promote greater interaction among neighbors. The group hopes to use the book as a starting point for community discussion circles.

High Point traffic concerns: With many more large construction trucks traveling High Point streets, concerned neighbors joined together to call for reduced speeds, increased signage, improved enforcement and education about safe walking routes for children. Improvement of school crossing signage and crosswalk enhancement were the first goals for the neighborhood. Parent and community groups conducted an awareness campaign and collected signatures on a petition to the City of Seattle that quickly resulted in achieving these goals.

The partnerships formed in this effort led to a much larger coalition including: the three elementary schools that serve High Point, Denny Middle School, Seattle Public Schools, City of Seattle Office of the Mayor, and Police and Transportation Departments, Feet First, Cascade Bicycle Club, University of Washington and other state and local public officials. The coalition developed a proposal for the Washington State Department of Transportation *Safe Routes to School* program. The project, which has been approved and awaits funding, is called *Go!* and will result in enhanced education, enforcement and community involvement in pedestrian and bicycle safety.

Computer services for disabled and elderly residents: In late FY 2005, SHA received a HUD Neighborhood Networks Grant for support and operations of the Special Technology Access Resource (STAR) Center located at Center Park. This three-year \$300,000 grant will provide public housing residents with access to technology to help them bridge the digital divide. SHA has

contracted with Digital Promise to provide computer classes, assistance with assistive technology devices for people with disabilities and referrals and support to employment service providers to meet these goals.

Resident participation funds

SHA received \$25 per occupied public housing unit, or about \$121,000, for Resident Participation Funds from HUD. During FY 2005, SHA and 15 duly-elected public housing council representatives developed and signed a Memorandum of Agreement on the use of funds to support:

- *The Voice* monthly newspaper for public housing residents: Produced by Neighborhood House, *The Voice* reports on community events, SHA policies or management and other issues of concern to low-income people. This year more residents wrote articles for *The Voice* than in previous years. The paper reaches a wide audience and is a primary means of communication between SHA and residents.
- *Resident councils*: Resident Participant Funds paid for office supplies, election supplies, interpretation at council meetings and council meeting flyer delivery in large public housing communities.
- *Diversity and multiculturalism training for resident leaders*: Five community council leaders participated in a two-day Undoing Institutional Racism training. This training reviews the root causes of institutional racism and gives participants tools to identify and address it in their communities and daily work.

Governance and representation in mixed-income communities

The public housing councils at Rainier Vista and High Point phased out during the year. At High Point, a new community association for all community members will replace the council once more new homes are leased or purchased. At Rainier Vista, the former public housing council started transforming itself into a council that serves community members of all incomes and housing types.

Community builders continued to promote more organic community organizing through affinity groups and informal gatherings (e.g., block parties, weekly seniors gathering, Vietnamese Tea Time), as well as interaction with existing neighborhood groups in the City of Seattle neighborhood council system.

High Point Healthy Homes, Healthy Communities

Neighborhood House is the lead agency for the \$1.8 million Healthy Homes, Healthy Communities initiative funded by HUD and the National Institute of Environmental Health Sciences. In addition to Neighborhood House and SHA, partners include Public Health–Seattle & King County, the University of Washington and Puget Sound Neighborhood Health Centers.

Youth and adult action teams completed the first round of outreach to all High Point residents to identify environmental justice issues and assess indoor environmental quality. They began to address

issues such as traffic speed, pedestrian safety and improvement of the Bataan/Graham Street staircase to increase resident connection between High Point and Delridge. They conducted 35 home environmental checks and developed a *Guide to Healthy Homes* in four languages.

The Research Team conducted 155 household baseline surveys to assess the effect of built conditions on households in the old High Point. A follow-up survey will be conducted in 2007 to assess the impact of the new High Point on residents' health.

This initiative includes the building of 35 “Breathe-Easy” Homes. Six of these homes have been completed with families scheduled to move in November 2005. To remain in the program, families must have a family member who suffers from asthma and must agree to meet stringent requirements. By the end of 2005, 28 families were enrolled.